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SRI N. R. THIAGARAJAN : தொண்ணூறு சதவிகிதத்திற்கு மேல் பரீட்சையில் தேறிய மாணவர்கள் ஜாபிதாவில் ஒன்றுகூட ஜில்லா போர்டு பள்ளிக்கூடம் இல்லை. போதுமான கட்டிட வசதி, மேஜை நாற்காலிகள், ரசாயன அறைகள் இல்லாத காரணத்தினால், ஜில்லா போர்டு பள்ளிகளில் பரீட்சையில் தேறுபவர்களின் எண்ணிக்கை மிகவும் குறைந்திருக்கிறது. ஆகவே, ஜில்லா போர்டு பள்ளிக்கூடங்களுக்கு கட்டிட வசதி, மற்ற வசதிகள் அளிப்பதற்கு தனியாக நிதி ஒதுக்குவதற்கு ஏற்பாடு செய்ய முடியுமா ?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM : நான் ஏற்கனவே சொன்னேன், ஒரே ஒரு பள்ளிக்கூடத்தில்தான் பெஞ்சு நாற்காலி இல்லை என்று. அதுவும் சமீபத்தில் ஆரம்பித்த பள்ளிக்கூடம் அது. அதற்கும் அவைகளை வாங்குவதற்கு உத்தரவு போடப்பட்டிருக்கிறது. பரீட்சையில் பாஸ் பண்ணாமல் இருப்பதற்கும் மேஜை, நாற்காலிக்கும் என்ன சம்பந்தம் என்று தெரியவில்லை. (சிரிப்பு.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER : Questions are over.

[NOTE.—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the member.]

II.—CALLING ATTENTION TO CATERPILLAR MENACE TO GROUNDNUT AND OTHER CROPS.

9–30 a.m. SRI N. K. PALANISAMI : Sir, under Rule 41 of the Assembly Rules, I call the attention of the Hon. the Minister for Home to a matter of urgent public importance, viz., the inadequate steps taken to put an end to the caterpillar menace to groundnut and other crops in the State.

* THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to make the following statement :—

Groundnut is one of the most important of the oilseeds crops grown in various districts of the State. The distinctive seasons for this crop are (1) March-April and (2) July-August. The crop grown in the former season is irrigated, while the crop grown in the latter is grown under rainfed conditions. Of these two, only the dry crop grown in red soil areas is likely to get affected by the red hairy cater pillar pest, especially after the receipt of the first showers, causing heavy loss. This pest is more or less endemic in the districts and so the occurrence of the pest can be expected during July-August to September after receipt of rains.

During 1960–61, the incidence of the red hairy caterpillar pest was noticed in the following agricultural divisions in this State :—

1. Krishnagiri.
2. Sattur.
3. Coimbatore
4. Erode.
5. Nagercoil.
6. Guindy.

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7. Cuddalore.
8. Villupuram.
9. Madurai.
10. Dindigul.

In other divisions, there was either no pest attack or it was mild and the damage was negligible. The total area affected was about 121,262 acres. The value of crops damaged was about Rs. 26,00,494. Chemicals were made available to the ryots and propaganda was also made to educate the ryots to adopt control measures besides enforcing the provisions of the Madras Agricultural Pests and Diseases Act. Due to the hesitation on the part of the ryots, the entire area could not be treated en block. Mass scale spraying was however arranged by using the power and hand-operated sprayers and wherever the ryots co-operated and availed of the Departmental help, they were benefited by the control measures. Further in most of the areas, the pesticides could not be issued at concessional rate as the groundnut which is not a food crop was not eligible for the concessional sale under the Grow More Food Rules. To overcome this difficulty during the current year (1961–62) the following methods are adopted for the prevention of the recurrence of the red hairy caterpillar pests on groundnut crops.—

(i) Pesticides are sold at concessional rate in the areas covered by the Plant Protection squads, sanctioned under the integrated Oilseeds Development Scheme, partly financed by the Indian Central Oilseeds Committee.

(ii) Even in the non-plant protection squad area, the chemicals are proposed to be sold at concessional rate if the situation of pest attack warranted such concession.

(iii) The plant protection and other extension staff are already concentrating their efforts in the areas affected by the caterpillar pest on groundnut crops and prompt control measures are adopted.

(iv) Pest control campaigns are already under progress in the affected areas. In fact, large scale campaign has already been launched in Madurai district with a view to control the incidence of the red hairy caterpillar pest attack in the groundnut areas and to avoid the damage as had happened last year.

(v) The pesticides will be sold to ryots at concessional rates even before the emergency of the pest, to enable them to adopt prophylatic measures wherever necessary.

(vi) The Agricultural Pests and Diseases Act is also enforced in the pest-affected areas in order to make the ryots adopt control measures compulsorily.

In respect of Polalchi Taluk of Coimbatore district where red-hairy caterpillar has affected the groundnut crops to a large-extent, a pilot scheme for carrying out aerial sraying of insecticides at a

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cost of Rs. 90,000 was implemented in May, 1961. A total area of nearly 8,200 acres was sprayed with the help of an aircraft got from the Government of India and two other aircrafts obtained from Messrs. Aviation Services, New Delhi. The spraying was quite effective and the extent of control recorded over the pests in the treated areas is considered to be satisfactory.

In respect of Madurai district, where the damages of the red-hairy caterpillar was heavy, the following precautionary measures have been taken :—

(i) Sanction was accorded for a sum of Rs. 40,000 for the purchase and sale of 1,000 bags of 83 lb., each of groundnut seeds to the groundnut growers in Usilampatti and Dindigul areas. The seeds will be distributed under the takkavi loan system as there are a large number of poor ryots who will not be able to pay cash and these will be distributed to the farmers at the rate of 125 pounds per acre.

(ii) Sanction was also accorded to an expenditure of Rs. 60,000 towards the supply of pesticides at 50 per cent cost to the ryots on subsidy-cum-loan basis in the block areas of Usilampatti, Sedapatti, Vadamadurai and Dindigul of Madurai District. The other 50 per cent of the cost of the pesticides will be met from the Integrated Oilseed Development Scheme. The loans will be issued on the lines of the Intensive Manuring Scheme. Cash sale of pesticides will however, be restricted to an extent of Rs. 100 per farmer for covering a maximum of 10 acres per individual to prevent abuse of the facilities offered. The loans given to the ryots will be recovered from the next harvest of the crop which has been benefited by the pesticides.

(iii) Sanction was also accorded for a sum of Rs. 9,000 for treating all the unoccupied and untreated pockets in the pest affected area at Government cost.

(iv) In addition, sanction was accorded for an expenditure of Rs. 500 towards the printing of leaflets and other materials required for giving wide publicity for taking precautionary methods in full collaboration with the panchayat unions.

(v) As it is reported that the hand collection of egg masses of the red-hairy caterpillar by the school children was very effective and good results were obtained last year in Coimbatore District, sanction was also accorded for an expenditure of Rs. 1,000 per block of Usilampatti, Sedapatti, Vadamadurai and Dindigul blocks to be given away as small remuneration for the school children and others engaged in hand picking of egg masses.

There was no incidence of the caterpillar pest on other crops during 1960-61.

All adequate measures have been taken to tackle the red hairy caterpillar menace in this State.